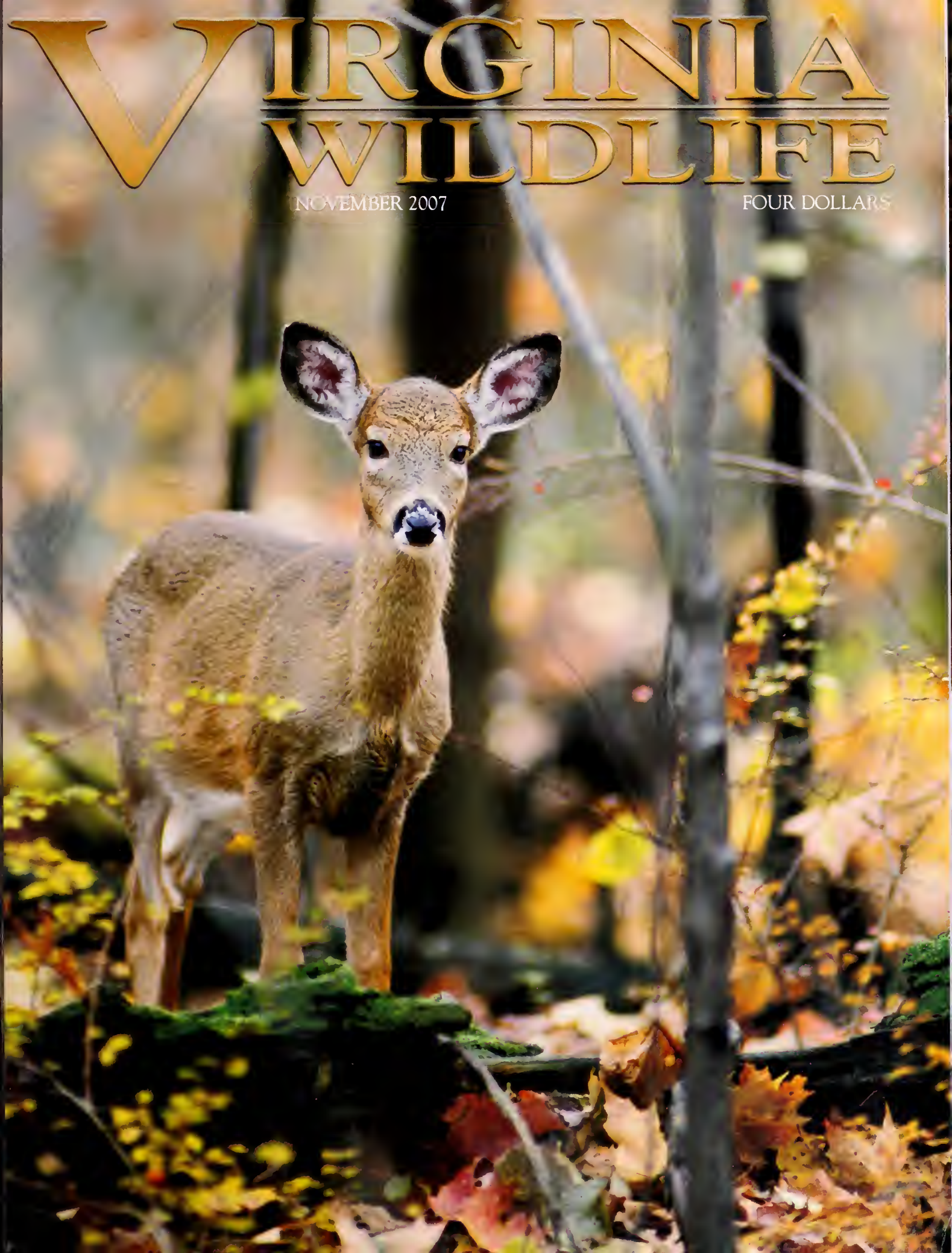
VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

NOVEMBER 2007

FOUR DOLLARS



J. Carlton Courter, III

Director

Christmas came early for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) this year with the addition of two new patrol boats, purchased with a nearly $300,000 grant through the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, a component of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Both Safeboats have been outfitted with state-of-the-art surveillance, navigation and communication technology to better serve our boating public.

Since 9/11, VDGIF Conservation Police Officers have been involved in security of critical facilities throughout the Commonwealth. Conservation police routinely patrol Virginia's waterways and serve as primary port security for small craft (14 to 24 feet). Because our officers have the authority to board these smaller vessels for safety inspections, they potentially could be first detectors of terrorist activities on the water.

In addition, Conservation Police Officers, due to their boat handling expertise, equipment and experience on the water, are often called upon for emergency response, such as search and rescue operations. The new 21-foot, 12-man Safeboats will enhance our ability to respond to natural disasters, such as flooding and hurricanes, and will significantly enhance our officers' daily operations.

At the unveiling of the Safeboats, the news media and special guests were invited for an on-the-water demonstration to show the effectiveness of these specialized watercraft. The event included brief remarks by Secretary of Natural Resources L. Preston Bryant, Jr., Secretary of Public Safety John W. Marshall, and Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness Robert P. Crouch. Secretary Bryant commented, "The Safeboats will enhance the Department's reputation as being the 'go to' law enforcement agency for remote areas and waterways."

While our law enforcement role has been expanding, our core mission continues to include safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing. With more and more people using Virginia's waterways, we continue to look for new and better ways to keep you safe.

If you're fishing, duck hunting, or just enjoying a beautiful fall day on the James or York rivers, you'll likely see one of these boats in action. Give a wave to the Conservation Police Officer and know that they are working to make your outdoor experience a safe and enjoyable one.

(Left to right) A television videographer and reporter ride along with Conservation Police Officer Robert Everidge, VDGIF Board Chairman Jimmy Hazel, Secretary of Natural Resources Preston Bryant, Colonel Mike Bise, and Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness Bob Crouch.

Mission Statement

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.

Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources

VOLUME 68 NUMBER 11

Commonwealth of Virginia
Timothy M. Kaine, Governor

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Color separations and printing by Progress Printing, Lynchburg, VA.

Virginia Wildlife (ISSN 0042 6792) is published monthly by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Send all subscription orders and address changes to *Virginia Wildlife*, P. O. Box 7477, Red Oak, Iowa 51591-0477. Address all other communications concerning this publication to *Virginia Wildlife*, P. O Box 11104, 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23230-1104. Subscription rates are $12.95 for one year, $23.95 for two years; $2.00 per each back issue, subject to availability. Out-of-country rate is $24.95 for one year and must be paid in U.S. funds No refunds for amounts less than $5.00. **To subscribe, call toll-free (800) 710-9369.** Postmaster Please send all address changes to *Virginia Wildlife* P.O. Box 7477, Red Oak, Iowa 51591-0477. Postage for periodicals paid at Richmond, Virginia and additional entry offices.

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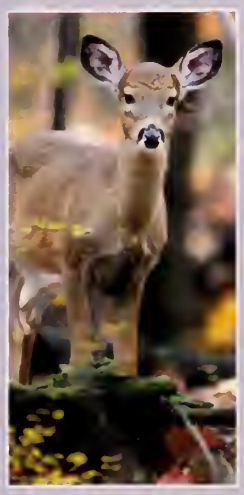

About the cover:
Harvesting a big buck is the dream of most avid deer hunters. But wildlife biologists stress that harvesting does and doe fawns, plays an important role in managing the state's deer population, which also helps improve the overall health of deer in Virginia.
©Bill Lea

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VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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36 issues for $29.95

FINDING THE WAY TO

ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNCOVER CLUES THAT POINT TO THE LOST VILLAGE OF ALGONQUIAN INDIAN CHIEF POWHATAN AND A FASCINATING CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF VIRGINIA.

story by Tee Clarkson
photos by Dwight Dyke

We have been driving back and forth on this country road for the last ten minutes: Lee Walker, Dwight Dyke and I. They made the mistake of handing me the map at some point in the trip, and I then made the mistake of not paying attention for several minutes, and that was all it took. Now we are lost. It has to be right here somewhere; based on the map we can't be far. Then in front of us a deer bounds across the gravel road and bolts

In 1996, after years of searching for that perfect home where one could enjoy a little hunting and fishing, Bob and Lynn Ripley, along with their Chesapeake Bay retriever, Mobjack Rhett, settled for a beautiful place on the York River. What they would come to learn about their new home would change their lives forever.

WEROWOCOMOCO

through a bean field. We stop. Two fawns follow her across and disappear into the same field, their heads barely visible above the tall beans. Suddenly there is a sense of life and of lushness greater than the surrounding farms. I look down at the map again. This is it! We are here. We have found Werowocomoco.

Most of us have heard of Werowocomoco, maybe just not by that name. It was the village where Chief Powhatan lived when the colonists settled in Jamestown. Powhatan was in his sixties then, the father of Pocahontas, and the head chief of the indigenous people of this area. This is the place that remained hidden in plain sight for the better part of four hundred years, and has just recently, in the last four years, been rediscovered.

Six months after moving in, Bob began building some ponds to train his retriever, Mobjack Rhett. Shortly after this, his wife Lynn began to find small shards of broken pottery, arrowheads and other Native American artifacts. Word began to quickly spread about her find. Left: Picture from John Smith's map "Virginia."

We continue up the long driveway that leads to a point jutting out into Purton Bay on the York River. Large trees line the bank. A pier, 200 feet long, sticks out past the mud flats into the deeper water. Two ospreys glide slowly over the shallows, searching for unsuspecting prey.

When John Smith and the rest of the settlers arrived in Jamestown, there were roughly 12,000-15,000 Native Americans inhabiting coastal Virginia. Perhaps 200 would have occupied the sprawling 50 acre settlement at Werowocomoco. Three early maps from the 1600s include Werowocomoco: Smith's map, Tindell's map, and the Zuniga map, yet once Powhatan and the villagers abandoned the site in 1609 to move further away from the European settlers, the exact location was lost.

The rediscovery of the site is an interesting story in itself. Based on the three early maps, historians had known the village was located somewhere in this area since the 1890s. Finding the exact location had proved to be difficult, or impossible, until Bob and Lynn Ripley purchased this property in 1996.

"Bob's dream as a young boy was to live in a place where he could walk out the back door and go hunting or fishing with his dog," says Lynn Ripley, Bob's wife. When they

found this site, they certainly found that and a lot more. After living on the property for six months, Bob decided to build some training ponds for his master hunter Chesapeake Bay retriever, Mobjack Rhett. Lynn began walking around, picking up trash and little pieces of glass that might cut the dog's feet. That was when she first began to notice the artifacts. She collected carving tools, arrowheads and pieces of pottery, keeping them in old cigar boxes and plastic containers.

I guess we are always walking on history, but when we exit the car on this humid July morning, it feels different. This place is different. It's as if you can feel bits and pieces of the lives that were lived here. How many times Bob and Lynn Ripley have told the story of stumbling upon this property and the events that have unfolded since then, I wouldn't venture to guess, but you would never know it when we arrive. They beam with excitement, recounting each moment, and each passing discovery.

To help answer some questions about the Native American artifacts that had been uncovered, the Ripleys invited archeologists to do a survey of their property. Carbon dating was then used to place a time period on many of the items that were recovered.

Dr. Martin Gallivan, anthropologist and archaeologist at The College of William and Mary, and member of the Werowocomoco Research Group that includes the College of William and Mary, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and the Fairfield Foundation, greets us as well.

All of a sudden there are so many stories being told that it is difficult to follow any one in particular. Bob and Lynn recount the events that have transpired during their time here and Martin explains the archaeological significance of the site. Finally, we walk out on the pier to get a look at the property from the water. I lag behind with Martin. He explains the original discovery and verification of the site as Werowocomoco.

David Brown and Thane Harpole, two local archaeologists and founders of the Fairfield Foundation, a non-profit company that excavates historic colonial sites, had heard through word-of-mouth of Lynn's growing collection of Native American artifacts and suspected that she

Anthropologists and archaeologists, along with students from The College of William and Mary, have been instrumental in excavating, recording and cataloging the recovered items.

had found something of importance, perhaps even Werowocomoco. They visited Bob and Lynn at their home and completed an original survey of the property. Upon completion of that original survey they were satisfied that this was in fact Powhatan's village. The site still could not be verified, however, until Dr. Randy Turner, from the Virginia Department of Historical Resources, signed off on it.

"It was the direct material connection to Jamestown that other sites do not have that convinced him that this was in fact Werowocomoco," explains Martin. Copper was a source and symbol of power to Powhatan and his people. Powhatan wanted copper and monopolized the flow of all copper into the region. "This site contains more copper from Jamestown than all other archaeological sites combined," says Martin.

Once the site was determined as Powhatan's village, the real excavation began. Martin and dozens of other people involved with the dig discovered through carbon dating that there was an original, much smaller settlement at this location as early as the 1200s. Powhatan, who united more than 30 different tribes into what is referred to as a chiefdom, didn't move to Werowocomoco until the late 1500s or early 1600s, but Martin discovered that the community was a powerful place 300 years prior to that.

We reach the end of the pier before Martin can finish the history. Turning and looking back at the property, it becomes clear why people chose to inhabit this location hun-

Opposite page: After archaeologists had completed a survey of the Ripley's property, Dr. Randy Turner, from the Virginia Department of Historical Resources, confirmed that the evidence pointed to the fact that the site was likely the lost village of Werowocomoco and home to Indian Chief Powhatan.

Summer Dig Unveils New Findings at Werowocomoco

In 2002, archaeologists discovered two parallel ditches at Werowocomoco. They have spent the five years since following these ditches in an effort to figure out where they are going as well as what their purposes may have been. The two outer ditches enclose an estimated eight acres, the possible function being to separate the main portion of the village from a special area located back away from the riverfront. "There is still a lot of mystery," says Thane Harpole, a member of the Werowocomoco Research Group. "The area could have been a place for the chief; it could have been a place to store special goods, or it could have separated the secular and spiritual portions of the village."

Over the last several years, the research group has located several smaller ditches within the larger enclosure. "What we discovered is a concentric series of enclosures," says Dr. Martin Gallivan. The smallest enclosure dates back 100 years before the larger enclosures, which appear to have been formed in the 1300s. Clearly this area was a special place a long time before Captain John Smith arrived.

Smith writes in his journal that Powhatan's home was set back from the river, likely meaning it was located inside the two larger ditches. Smith never specifically mentions the ditches in his writing, but clearly they were here when he visited Werowocomoco.

This past summer yielded a large amount of artifacts in a specific area of the ditch, leading archaeologists to believe they have discovered the remnants of a large feast or celebration. They also continued to discover pieces of copper, proving extensive trade took place between Powhatan's tribe and the settlers. "What we have discovered," says Gallivan, "is that Werowocomoco is a lot more complicated archaeologically than we had originally thought."

When the historical significance was finally realized, the Ripleys gladly began to allow for further excavation by archeologists. Since Lynn's initial discoveries thousands of Native American artifacts and even some from early colonists have been uncovered.

dreds of years before the first colonists arrived on this land. Located on a point between two creeks, the site would have provided all the ingredients necessary to thrive in this country 800 years ago. The numerous springs supplied freshwater, and the surrounding creeks and shallow flats and marshes would have been teaming with waterfowl, oysters, fish and crabs. As we head back down the pier, a ray glides quietly through the clear water, vanishing under the dock momentarily and then reappearing on the other side. What this place must have been like when Powhatan lived here: roasting duck and venison, smoked wild turkey and fish would have permeated the air in bumper years. Children played right here where we are standing on the shore while their mothers molded clay pottery and wove clothing; their fathers shaped tools and fletched arrows.

Bob and Lynn take us to see some of the artifacts Lynn has found over the years. We mount the hill and head toward a small building set apart from the main house. Inside a safe Lynn pulls out boxes and boxes of arrowheads, pottery and various carving tools. The arrowheads each have a unique look and are made from rocks found in different parts of North America, which is evidence of the trading that took place between different tribes up and down the East Coast. Lynn acknowledges that buying this property has been a life changing experience. "It's amazing that we live on a piece of property that Captain John Smith and Pocahontas walked on," she says, "Sometimes I imagine them walking down toward the river, past young children learning to make pottery or stone tools. You just feel the history when you walk around." In fact, Werowocomoco was the only location where Smith and Powhatan walked together.

The Ripleys are cognizant of the importance of the site. It is on private property; however, they have been generous in aiding in the discovery of its tremendous historical significance. Since the location was verified as the original site of Werowocomoco

in 2003, the Ripleys have allowed archaeologists, students and professional volunteers to excavate the property for six weeks of the year, under the direct supervision of Dr. Gallivan. During any given May and June over the last several years, there have been as many as 15 people living and digging on their property. Bob acknowledges that in the future they want to establish a private foundation for Werowocomoco, so that when they are gone, as many people as possible will be able to come here and see what the Virginia Indians had and where they lived when Jamestown was founded. But he also points out that "sacredness is primary." Bob and Lynn have consulted the Virginia Indians and they are supportive of what the Ripleys are doing with the property.

Bob reaches into a box and pulls a crystal arrowhead from its container, placing it in my hand. It is a thing of beauty. I can see the skin of my palm on the other side. I imagine someone sitting and carving it, examining its every curvature similar to the way I am now. Who were they? What thoughts permeated their minds on a daily basis?

As the rest of the group still examines the artifacts, Martin and I step outside and head toward the site where Powhatan's house may have been located. By Smith's account the house was roughly 600 paces from the shore of the York River, and over 70 feet in length, certainly the largest of the habitations in the village. We walk through thick grass back to the edge of a field. With no excavation going on at this time, the site is marked with freshly replaced sod. Martin walks around the spot, tracing the house and giving me a clear idea of its size. I stand right in the middle. There is a haunting feeling on this spot. Right here. Right where I am standing, Pocahontas laid herself over John Smith, saving his life and marking a pivotal point in American history. Lynn was right, you can feel it. My emotions are not easy to describe. It's almost like sensing a ghost, but not of a single person, more a group of people, like a cumulative entity. Something incredible existed here. I feel somehow sadder and wiser in this understanding, similar to the way one feels after finishing a Faulkner novel.

Archeologists, students and professional volunteers continue to unearth clues that help to paint a picture of what life must have been like during a very unique period in Virginia's history

Across the field I see Bob leading the rest of the group through the grass. I am glad I got here first and had a moment to soak in the magnitude of this location. My feelings have faded now with the arrival of the group, but more are sure to be discovered in the future by those that have the opportunity to visit this site and experience Werowocomoco. □

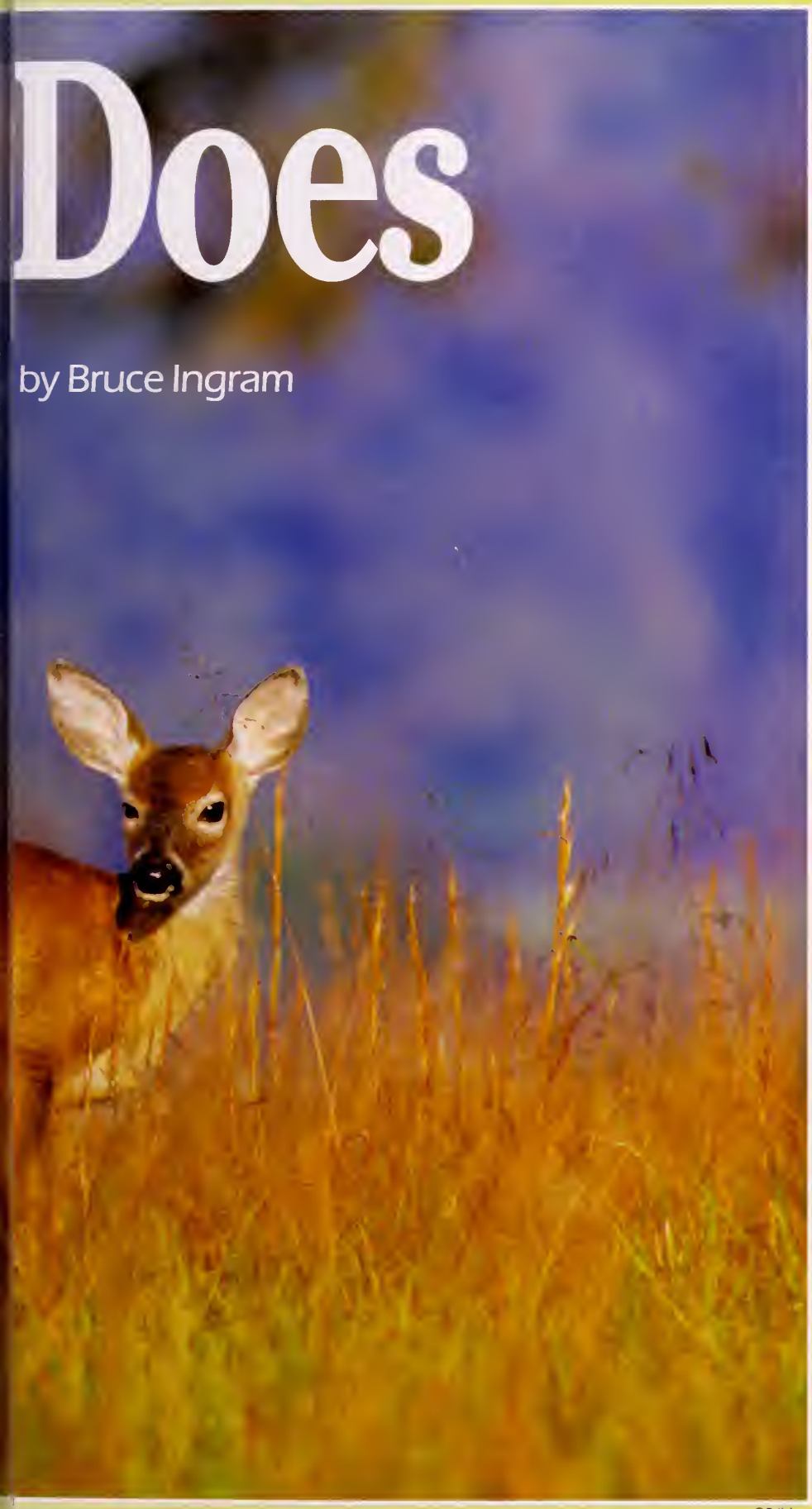
Tee Clarkson is an English high school teacher and regular contributor to Virginia Wildlife.

Harvesting

Should doe fawns be taboo?

Does

by Bruce Ingram



©Bill Lea

The following two incidents graphically illustrate the differences in opinion on how we Virginia hunters should help the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries manage the state's deer herd. A farmer had invited me to hunt on his Southwest Virginia spread with the expressed stipulation that I shoot only does—a restriction that I readily agreed to.

While we were on stand and still discussing the property's layout, we espied a deer about 60 yards away. We both immediately glassed the whitetail and confirmed that it was a doe fawn. Since the day was an antlerless one, I quickly mounted my muzzleloader and was preparing to shoot when the landowner said "Stop, don't shoot the little ones."

This past season, I visited a Franklin County farm—again one on which the landowner had invited me to hunt. The restriction there was that no bucks were to be killed unless they featured at least eight points. With the previous incident in mind, I mentioned to the landowner that I preferred to kill does and would gladly take a doe fawn if the opportunity arose.

"Please do kill a doe fawn," the gentleman replied. "I've got to get a handle on my deer overpopulation. They're hurting my crops."

Dave Steffen, forest game research biologist for the Department, believes that doe fawns shouldn't be treated as the proverbial sacred cows.

"If we are to effectively manage Virginia's deer herd, there should not be a stigma about killing antlerless deer and that includes doe fawns," says Steffen. "But it's going to take education to change the hunting public's mindset about killing fawns. Just like it is an ongoing thing to encourage hunters in some areas of the state that we have to harvest more does."

Harvesting Does

Tim Lilley, director of public relations for the Quality Deer Management Association, lists a few of the benefits of harvesting does in areas where the herd is overly abundant.

- ✓ Herd numbers go down and wildlife habitat improves, which is beneficial to game and non-game animals.
- ✓ Length of rut decreases and becomes more intense, thus insuring that the does become pregnant at the optimal time.
- ✓ This, in turn, insures that fawns are born at the optimal time, which results in them being healthier.
- ✓ Which then helps lead to an improvement in overall herd health.

©Bill Lea

No one is advocating shooting a spotted fawn. But when doe fawns are 6 months old, they will soon turn into a reproductive machine

Biological Reasons for Harvesting Doe Fawns

Steffen relates that biological reasons exist for harvesting a doe fawn.

"Fawns aren't generally big producers in the population, they represent the largest cohort in the herd, and they consume resources that would otherwise be available to other deer," he says. "Harvest of 6-month-old deer that is directed at females will also provide future herd control benefits, if that is the population objective."

Steffen admits that for some Virginia landowners, hunters and members of the general public, the topic of harvesting fawns—or mature does for that matter—is controversial.

"Killing a 6 or 7-month-old deer doesn't sit well with some people," he says. "Doing so conjures up images of killing Bambi, baby deer and spotted fawns—which colors people's feelings. However, during the fall hunting seasons 6-month-old deer bear no resemblance to baby spotted fawns. Six-month-old deer are self-sufficient, unspotted, and may be nearly as big as their mother.

"Doe fawns in good physical shape even breed during their first autumn. While we all commonly refer to these 6-month-old deer as 'fawns,' the term is probably unfortunate because it no doubt perpetuates the stigma against harvesting deer during their first autumn."

What If I Kill a Buck Fawn?

On a recent trip to Franklin County, a friend and I, at the request of a landowner, were specifically targeting does. Unfortunately, my friend killed a buck fawn, and he felt quite bad about doing so. But the landowner understood and commended my buddy for trying to do the right thing. Dave Steffen maintains that an Old Dominion hunter harvesting a buck fawn is not the end of the world nor will it ruin a hunt club's or property owner's objectives.

Still hunting through a Franklin County pine plantation, VDGIF Wildlife Biologist Dave Steffen looks for the telltale signs of a whitetail. Steffen believes that there should not be a stigma attached to hunters harvesting doe fawns.

"I have seen some deer clubs and hunters ridicule other hunters for killing buck fawns," he relates. "I have even seen some hunt clubs levying fines on members that accidentally killed buck fawns. One result of that kind of thinking is that people may hesitate to kill does for fear of being mistaken and charged a fine."

Wildlife biologists emphasize that the most important strategy for population control is the harvest of adult does. Population objectives become tough to achieve when hunters become too conservative about killing antlerless deer because of unreasonable concerns about mistakenly killing 6-month-old male fawns.

Distinguishing Buck and Doe Fawns

Determining whether a fawn is a male or a female can be exceptionally difficult. And many Virginia hunters, including this writer, have mistakenly killed buck fawns when they thought they were shooting a doe of some age.

"It needs to be pointed out that pedicles (also known as buttons) are not always apparent on buck fawns," says Steffen. "This is especially true for late fawns, that is younger fawns, and in populations near carrying capacity. Growth and maturation of

deer, including pedicle development in male fawns, is impeded in densely populated herds. Unfortunately, these high density populations (with less distinctive buck fawns) will also be the herds that need the most aggressive antlerless harvests. It will be tough to be certain about the sex of fawns in these circumstances.

"It is tough enough for many hunters to distinguish adult does from fawns. While commendable, hunter expectations to further separate fawns by sex will be even more difficult to achieve and probably only realistic under certain circumstances, for example, close proximity, good light, and the use of optics."

Distinguishing between doe and male fawns begins with distinguishing between adult does and their offspring. A mature doe features an elongated neck, head and nose. Does have what is often called a "pop bottle" look. Conversely, fawns have a "squared off" appearance with short noses and foreheads, and the ears appear larger in comparison to the head.

Veteran bowhunter Jim Crumley says that buck fawns possess a "boxier" head than doe fawns. The pedicles are the clincher, of course, but Crumley says that oftentimes to see the buttons, hunters will have to be patient, use binoculars, and have the deer within 30 yards. A gun hunter spotting several fawns as close as 75 yards is not likely to be able to ascertain the differences he maintains.

The Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) publishes a very helpful poster: "How to Sex and Age Live Antlerless White-tailed Deer." The poster features pictures of buck and doe fawns and says to distinguish the former, hunters should look "for the presence of developing antlers" and a head that "appears flatter and less rounded." For a doe fawn, look to see that it has "no developing antlers" and "a head that appears rounder." For more information, contact the organization at QDMA.com or 1-800-209-DEER.

Behavior and Size Differences?

Can hunters distinguish between buck and doe fawns by their actions and size?

"Buck fawns may be more likely to be found by themselves, as they tend to be more adventuresome than doe fawns," says Steffen. "And, generally, the bigger of two fawns is likely to be the male. However, a hunter could also easily come across a lone doe fawn that has been orphaned. What's more, the larger and smaller fawn could both be males. So, behavior and size differences alone are not enough to make a solid determination of a fawn's sex."

©Bruce Ingram

The Reproductive Ability of Virginia's Doe Fawns

Many members of the general public do not realize that the spotted fawn they observe in August will be capable of giving birth the next spring. In some states where the herd is in balance and food is abundant, some 40 to 60 percent of the fawns will breed in any given year.

Matt Knox, the deer program supervisor for the Department, says that over the past decade between 15 and 21 percent (with an average of 17 percent) of Virginia's doe fawns have reproduced. In the best, most healthy deer herds, such as in Iowa, Missouri and Kansas, this figure would run over 40 percent.

Interestingly, Knox says that buck fawns typically constitute 18–23 percent of Virginia's antlerless harvest, but that the percentage "appears to be declining." Button bucks make up 9–12 percent of the total deer harvest, but that figure as well is declining.

When I returned home after checking in my Franklin County doe fawn I told my wife about tagging a 6-month-old doe. Elaine was ecstatic, rhapsodizing that the tender venison would go well in any number of dishes. And I felt a sense of accomplishment for having helped a farmer manage his deer herd. I make no apologies about killing doe fawns—and neither should Virginia's sportsmen and women. □

Bruce Ingram is the author of The James River Guide, The New River Guide, *and* The Shenandoah/Rappahannock Rivers Guide. *To obtain a copy contact Bruce Ingram at P.O. Box 429, Fincastle, VA 24090 or contact him at be_ingram@juno.com.*

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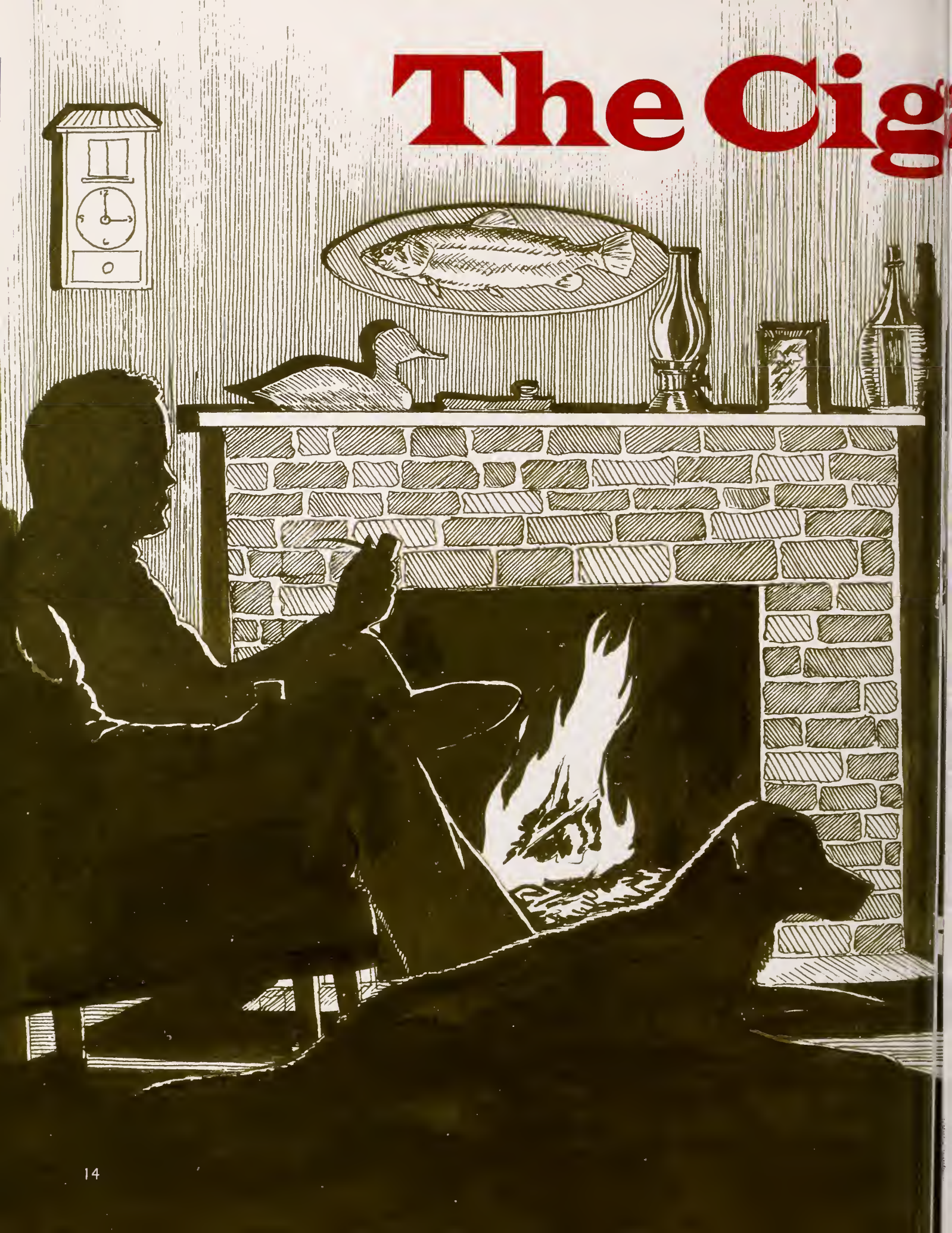

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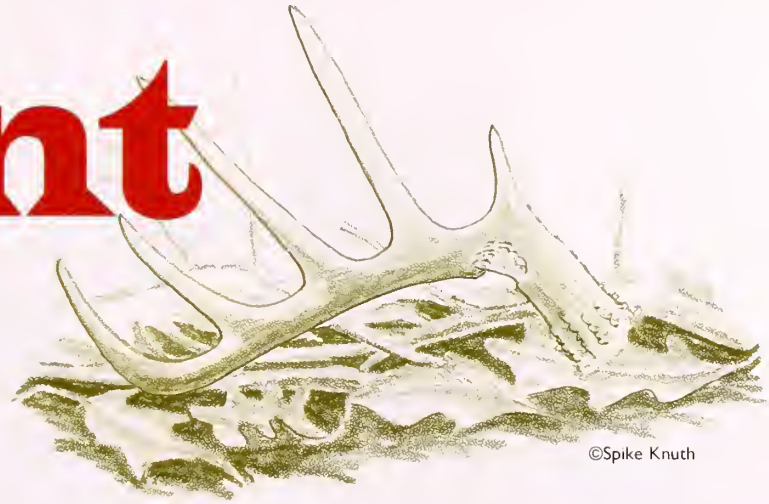

A matter of ethics—hunting for meaning and meat in a modern world.

by Bruce A. Lemmert

It has been a couple of years since I attended an outdoor ethics seminar at historic Woodmont Gun Club on the other side of the Potomac River. The Izaak Walton League of America sponsors this seminar each year. Volunteer hunter education instructors, conservation police officers, wildlife biologists, hunters and fishermen typically attend this ethics seminar. In the case of the seminar I attended, a college professor also attended and helped facilitate the gathering. This was not so much a lecture type atmosphere as it was an exchange of information from all involved. The discussions were open, heartfelt and sometimes lively.

What did I learn? Some things take time to ponder. Coming away, I realized that the group didn't unanimously agree on anything other than the idea that all outdoors people should obey the wildlife and fish laws. And I thought…"Well, that was not very profound." Who needs ethics when we have laws, and plenty of them? "Heh, if it is legal, what's the problem?"

As both a hunter and a Conservation Police Officer I'm somewhat uncomfortable with the idea that, "If it is legal, it's okay." But, from the inception of the concept of sport hunting and the term sportsman, ethics have indeed been built into law. I think it is safe to say that virtually every wildlife agency in the United States has its foundation built on the concept of fair chase hunting and fishing. Some of these laws predate the agencies that now enforce them. One law here in Virginia makes it a crime to kill or capture any wild bird or wild animal adjacent to any area while a field or forest fire is in progress. I've never ever seen, or even heard of someone attempting to violate this law. But, it is an old, old law. I'm sure the roots of this law go all the way back to colonial times when Indians commonly used fire as a tool to drive game for kill and capture. The practice was subsequently used by both Indians and English settlers. The object was pure and simple utility. Sportsmen saw it as a flagrant violation of fair chase. Need we mention other problems with the practice of fire hunting today?

Some other bedrock ethical laws that predate many wildlife agencies are the laws that insist that our wildlife bounty be shared. Daily and seasonal bag limits were adopted to spread the wildlife wealth. Vestiges of resentment lingered toward the tyranny of the European game laws and the concept of the "King's deer." Here, every person owns the wildlife. Every person has a right to hunt and fish, regardless of wealth or social status. But in order to accommodate

Ned Smith

Outdoor Ethics

Founded in 1922, the Izaak Walton League of America is one of the oldest and most respected conservation organizations, with 22 active chapters in Virginia. For decades, Outdoor Ethics has been a flagship program for the Izaak Walton League.

- The League has hosted three national outdoor ethics conferences that addressed outdoor ethics concerns of different recreational user groups, conservation organizations, and natural resource managers. The outcome was a long-term strategy that better addressed the practical considerations for promoting responsible outdoor behavior to the wide range of outdoor recreation participants in the U.S.
- In cooperation with Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the League's annual "Ethics In Action" workshops are held at our Woodmont Chapter's historic Woodmont Lodge in Hancock, Maryland. These two one-day workshops held in late July or early August for hunter education instructors, feature speakers from the law enforcement, natural resources, and higher education communities discussing ways to improve teaching ethics to hunters. This course is available and accessible to Virginia's volunteer outdoor educators.
- The League also makes available a variety of outdoor ethics studies as research and support materials along with printed handouts for use by hunter and angler educators.

Through hands-on projects like stream and roadside litter cleanups, educational outreach, and stewardship efforts such as anti-poaching reward programs, the Izaak Walton League instills a conservation ethic into thousands of outdoor enthusiasts each year.

Izaak Walton League of America
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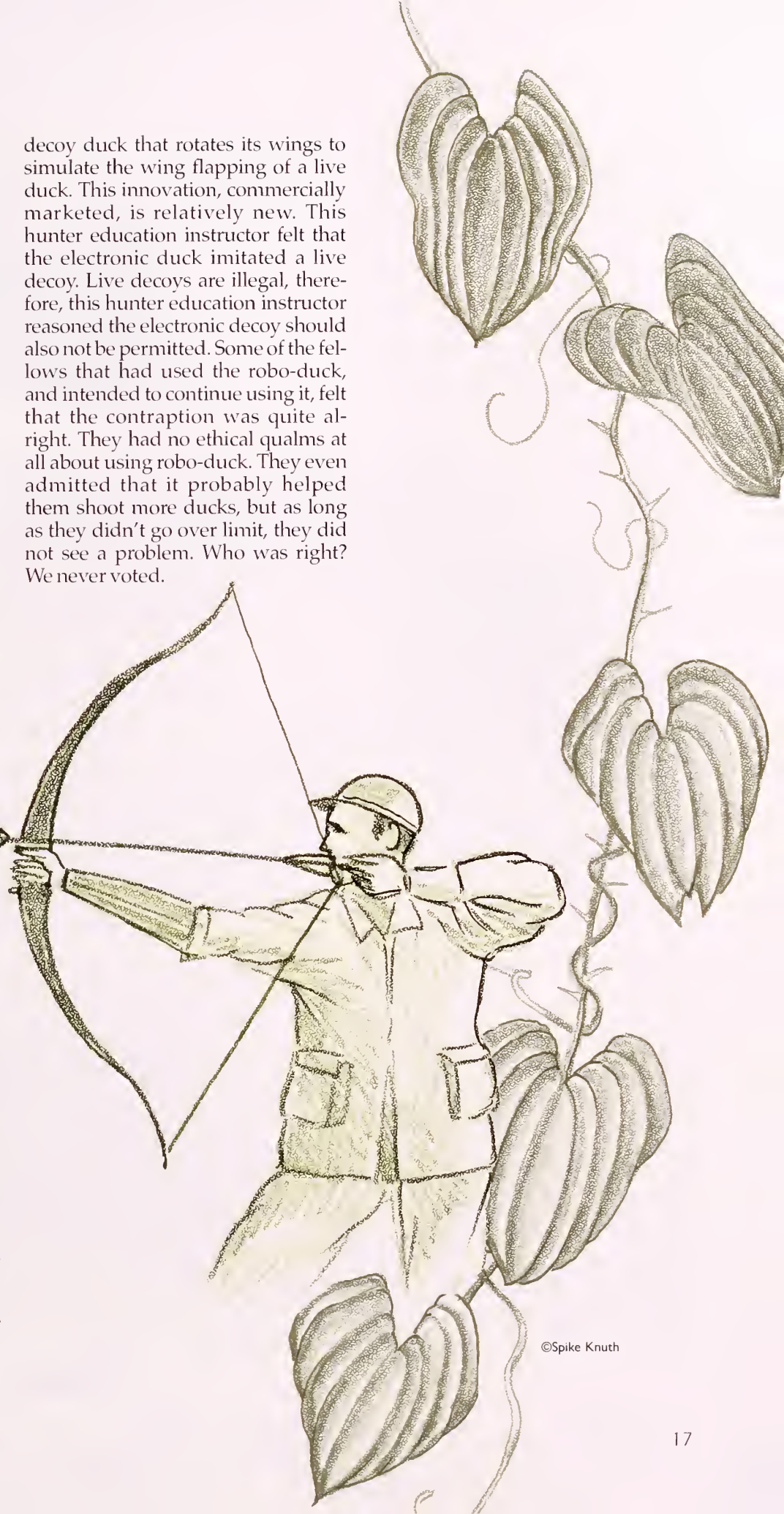
large increases in human population, inefficiencies had to be woven into our hunting and fishing laws. Ethics have continuously played a part in these inefficiencies.

My work as a Conservation Police Officer often now brings me into contact with people of different cultures from nearly every part of the globe. Some recent immigrants seem genuinely perplexed that we would insist on using a single hook and line to catch fish when a cast net would be so much more efficient. If music can be seen as the universal language, I believe fishing may be seen as the universal activity. I have yet to see a culture where the people did not enjoy fishing. Our fishing and hunting laws, customs and ethics can seem downright bizarre to people of other cultures. We must teach them. Newcomers will come to realize that the wildlife system that we struggle with, sometimes cuss, and love is the best on earth.

So where does that leave ethics? If ethics are already part and parcel of our outdoor laws, do we really need anything other than our laws? Many hunters whom follow the letter of the game laws are often referred to as ethical hunters. I won't quibble with that sobriquet. Much of what a hunter or fisherman does is on their personal honor. They are the only ones who know. But, the law cannot possibly be expected to accommodate every possible situation that arises in an increasingly crowded outdoors. Courtesy, commonsense and respect are most assuredly the backbone of our outdoor ethics heritage. Rest assured, ethics will continue to be written into law. This is based on what I call the two-thirds rule. When two-thirds of the people that care, want an ethic to become law, it will be ordained as such.

The Izaak Walton Outdoor Ethics Seminar, at Woodmont Gun Club, was running along pretty smoothly, when a hunter education instructor spoke-up and said, "These so-called robo-ducks should not be allowed." The robo-duck is a battery operated decoy duck that rotates its wings to simulate the wing flapping of a live duck. This innovation, commercially marketed, is relatively new. This hunter education instructor felt that the electronic duck imitated a live decoy. Live decoys are illegal, therefore, this hunter education instructor reasoned the electronic decoy should also not be permitted. Some of the fellows that had used the robo-duck, and intended to continue using it, felt that the contraption was quite alright. They had no ethical qualms at all about using robo-duck. They even admitted that it probably helped them shoot more ducks, but as long as they didn't go over limit, they did not see a problem. Who was right? We never voted.



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Robo-duck identifies a much larger issue. What role should ethics play with respect to new gadgets, gizmos and technology? In the interest of full disclosure, my heart still lies with wool shirts and walnut stocks. Those of us that remember when Cabela's was an ad for dry flies in the back of *Sports Afield* are simply amazed to see the latest Cabela's catalogue. Chances are, the Cabela's catalogue is now larger than your local telephone book. Yes, I buy my share of outdoor stuff too, so I know that most of these new items are benign. However, I believe a cautionary note is in order when new technology truly substitutes for effort, skill and what I call woodcraft. Of course most new products appeal to us because they profess to lessen our effort, substitute for our lack of skill, or enhance our woodcraft. So where do we draw the line? I don't profess to know the answer to that question, but I know it is important to remind ourselves sometimes, what exactly it is we are searching for.

An acquaintance of mine rode his all-terrain vehicle nearly everywhere he went. When this gentleman was in his treestand, the ATV was not far away. Health problems brought on doctors visits and then a hospital stay and then, a heart by-pass operation. The doctor's prescription after the operation? Walk more...your life may depend on it. When people rediscover walking, they find out they see more, hear more, and smell more. Maybe most importantly, they live more.

The compound bow and the portable treestand are examples of innovations that have happened during my hunting time that have seemingly added to the outdoor experience. I believe this was accomplished without diminishing the predator or the prey. Collectively, deer hunting skills are much better today than they were 40 years ago when I began deer hunting. The com-

Fair Chase Statement

FAIR CHASE, as defined by the Boone and Crockett Club, is the ethical, sportsmanlike, and lawful pursuit and taking of any free-ranging wild, native North American big game animal in a manner that does not give the hunter an improper advantage over such animals.

Hunter Ethics

Fundamental to all hunting is the concept of conservation of natural resources. Hunting in today's world involves the regulated harvest of individual animals in a manner that conserves, protects, and perpetuates the hunted population. The hunter engages in a one-to-one relationship with the quarry and his or her hunting should be guided by a hierarchy of ethics related to hunting, which includes the following tenets:

1. Obey all applicable laws and regulations.
2. Respect the customs of the locale where the hunting occurs.
3. Exercise a personal code of behavior that reflects favorably on your abilities and sensibilities as a hunter.
4. Attain and maintain the skills necessary to make the kill as certain and quick as possible.
5. Behave in a way that will bring no dishonor to either the hunter, the hunted, or the environment.
6. Recognize that these tenets are intended to enhance the hunter's experience of the relationship between predator and prey, which is one of the most fundamental relationships of humans and their environment.

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pound bow and the portable tree stand helped put more people in the woods. There is no substitute for in-woods experience. An expanding deer herd coincided with these innovations to provide expanded seasons and opportunities. A serious deer hunter today can get as much good experience in one year as a 1960s hunter could get in five.

It has been a few years since fellow Conservation Police Officer, Ray Solomon, asked me what I thought of the new scent block clothing. Fact of the matter was that I hadn't thought about it. I asked Ray if it worked. He replied that some hunters he had talked to thought it worked. As a hunter of 30 years ago, I doubt if I would have had a second thought as I rushed out to purchase my own scent block clothing. With 40 years of hunting experience under my belt, this was indeed a point to ponder.

That old bug-a-boo...scent. Upon reflection, scent has probably foiled more of my well-laid hunting plans than any other single factor. We plotted and schemed to eliminate scent. I'm sure the most harebrained scheme that I went along with to conquer scent was the year we smoked cigars. I know. It sounds counter intuitive. Somehow, at the time, it seemed logical. In actuality, the cigar smoking plan was a total surrender to that re-

R. Hines

markable olefactory sensor, a deer's nose. The logic was this. If the wind is wrong, a deer is going to smell us...no matter what precautions we have taken. Therefore, it is a wise hunter that knows every subtlety of the woods air currents. What better visible marker of woods air currents than "cigar smoke." The utter simplicity of the plan seemed audacious...and, yes... it was a disaster. There were numerous problems, but the whole "cigar hunt" plan, went up in ignominious smoke when my hunting partner's cigar came between his released bowstring and the target. "Twaaang."

I still ponder the "scent block" question. The essence of deer hunting is so intertwined with scent, that to hunt without concern for scent is to...in a way, rob us of the experience we seek. When innovation and technology bring new techniques and products faster than we can collectively digest their rightful place in the outdoors, individuals should take pause.

Without utility, or at least the potential for utility, it would be difficult to say that one had hunted or fished. This utility is drenched in tradition and respect. The "sportsman or sportswoman" taken in the context of hunting and fishing is not to be confused with the entertainment sports model, as is often seen on television. The television sports model seemingly teaches that one must only abide by the written rule and that an infraction of the rules is only an infraction if the referee calls it so. This is a poor model. The person that hunts or fishes is above this. They are held to a higher standard. They respect tradition, other people, nature, the land and, most importantly, themselves. Their actions reflect this respect. They are not spectators. They take pride in being master of their own soul.

To hunt or fish is to participate in the drama of life. The journey is everything. □

Bruce Lemmert is a Conservation Police Officer with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and a member of the Virginia Chapter of The Wildlife Society and the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association.

Fulfilling a Dream

by Hal W. Myers III

Every avid outdoorsman I know has a dream that he wants to make into a reality. For example the trout fisherman wants to catch a lunker brown on a 1 ½-pound tapered leader. The grouse hunter is always striving for a double in a grapevine thicket. My conquest may seem simple to some but for me it has been a long struggle. I have harvested my share of wild gobblers in the spring but I never had any luck in the fall. I wanted to take an elusive autumn tom. Anyone who has hunted this magnificent bird may be able to understand my dilemma.

When the 1977 fall season opened in November, I told myself that this would be the year that my drought would end, just like I told myself last year and the year before and the year before that. I hunted hard the first four days of the season without even sighting a turkey. I traveled over mountains that a few months before had been filled with gobbler music.

I drove to my hunting destination on the fifth morning of the season. I thought of seasons past when I saw numerous gangs consisting of old hens and young birds feeding within shotgun range, but I saw no gobblers. Turkeys had come to my calling, answering in a series of coarse yelps, but they were young beardless jakes.

Memories of old toms racing to the safety of nearby ridges or disappearing as if swallowed by the forest floor came to mind. Maybe today would be the day I would put the drop on my first fall gobbler. Maybe it would be 10 years from today.

Parking my truck at my grandmother's home, I walked to the country store she rents to a local businessman. The proprietor, another customer, and I conversed while I consumed a soft drink. We talked about subjects that usually arise in a country store conversation; the local news, weather and who had seen any turkeys lately. The later part of the conversation usually takes place only when there is a diehard turkey hunter present. After finishing my drink I told the two men to look for me back shortly with a gobbler.

Picking up my gun, I started walking up the mountain behind the store. The wind was blowing the leaves in small whirlwinds; its gust left my cheeks stinging in the cold November air. The sawmill across the river from where I was located was in full operation. The combination of wind and saws held hearing to a minimum. I climbed about 400 yards up an old skid path on the mountainside and entered a hardwood ridge.

The ground was covered by acorns from the surrounding oaks and I knew turkeys fed there occasionally. As I neared the top of the ridge I spotted movement—turkeys!

Thirty yards away were three large turkeys! They saw me the same time I noticed them and turned to run. As the middle bird turned I saw the beard hanging from his breast. I raised my shotgun, aimed at his neck, and fired. At the crack of the gun the gobbler rolled head over heels with his tail feathers spread into a fan. I raced to the spot where he beat the ground with his great wings. In a few seconds it was all over.

Kneeling, I admired the black tipped feathers of the old gobbler, the long spurs, and jet black beard. I was as happy as a five year old at Christmas as I carried the magnificent bird back down the mountain to the store.

When I got to the store the same customer was still there. He and the proprietor could hardly believe their eyes. I had been gone only 20 minutes and killed a gobbler. While we were admiring the turkey we found three smaller beards that I had completely overlooked at first glance.

The customer told me I had to be the luckiest man he knew to hunt that short of a time and kill a gobbler. What he did not think about was it had only taken me 20 minutes and quite a few years. Four hundred yards and many miles to bag my first fall gobbler.

It was just the time and place for my efforts to be rewarded.

I often think about how long it took me to fulfill my dream. But if it takes that long for another autumn tom, I have three extra beards and many memories to fill all the empty spaces. □

Because of his love of hunting, Hal Myers, III, wrote this account of taking his first fall turkey back in 1977. He passed away March 27, 2006, at the age of 50.

Giving the Environm

Over the years, Peasley Middle School has become a leader in promoting and teaching environmental stewardship to its students through creative service learning projects.

story and photos by Gail Brown

Middle school kids are all about cell phones, hanging with friends, and hot, new technology; but at Peasley Middle School in Gloucester County, you'd have to add environmental education and service learning to the list of what's important to them. In less time than it takes to say "macroinvertebrate," Peasley's young naturalists can dash off a paragraph detailing the how, what and where of their water monitoring activities—and explain why their work is important. Recently, when asked to do just that, all of the students said working in the field was not only the best way to learn, but that what they were doing was of value for the community and for themselves.

Peasley Middle School is one of the founding schools in the Virginia Naturally School Recognition program. A leader in the field of environmental stewardship, Peasley's teachers and 800 plus students are poised to begin an intensive outreach program aimed at educating Gloucester's citizens about their water quality studies and watershed protection. The kids have identified some problems and, with the guidance of their teachers and support from their administrators, they intend to work with the community to help resolve them.

At Peasley, all 6th grade students collect and analyze data either from the stream behind their school or off campus at several sites in the surrounding York and Piankatank watersheds. In addition, students maintain oyster floats in the Rappahannock River and work with Oyster Reef Keepers of Virginia. All 7th grade students work with the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve System and participate in a field and lab study on the York River at the Virginia Marine Institute of Science.

Considering the increase in requirements facing schools during the last decade, how did the staff at Peasley maintain their focus on environmental studies and service learning over the years? The answer is both complex and direct: complex if you consider the hurdles involved in

Top Left: Teamwork and technology make the difference.
Above: Jobs are divided up and information is shared with the group.

ent a Helping Hand

Virginia Naturally

Keeping accurate records is critical.

adjusting student schedules to provide multiple field experiences for all students; yet direct, as the staff is guided by their school's mission statement which includes these words, "Our students need to be good citizens and to be caretakers of our planet."

Because of their accomplishments and ambitious outreach plans, this past year Peasley Middle joined the select group of 65 schools to benefit from the Learn and Serve Virginia grant program. Thirteen grants were awarded to school divisions and clusters of school divisions in the Commonwealth. In addition, Peasley Middle is one of only two schools to be recognized as an eighth year Virginia Naturally School and a Learn and Serve School. Very impressive!

Learn and Serve Virginia Grants, like Peasley's *Linking the York and You*, promote environmental stewardship through service learning projects that are based on Virginia's Standards of Learning. Peasley's grant is designed to increase opportunities for all students to continue their watershed restoration projects and to allow the students opportunities to promote protection of local waterways in their county.

Above: Students share their notes with teacher Susan Walton.
Right: This sea robin was studied and released safely.

Peasley will benefit from the financial and educational support of the Learn and Serve Grant Program for three years. Funds will help students update their outdoor classroom, which was built gratis, by Danny Rigau of Force 5 builders. The grant will also support the students' efforts to build a watershed-friendly bio (filtration)-pond and nature area. It took a lot of muscle and determination to dig out the rock-hard ground this past year, but hard work and determination is what Peasley is all about. Even stalwart teacher Susan Walton admitted that had she known how hard it was to shovel out an 8 x 10 hole she might have reconsidered

Above left: Classroom studies include raising and measuring flounder.
Above: A report is still a report—even outside.

Learn and Serve Virginia Grants

- Promote environmental stewardship through service learning projects.
- Provide opportunities for all students to participate in water quality studies.
- Promote watershed protection projects.
- Include a strong community service component.
- Teach civic responsibility as well as academic content.
- Are funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service.
- Integrate the Virginia Standards of Learning with state and local environmental initiatives such as the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement and the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience.

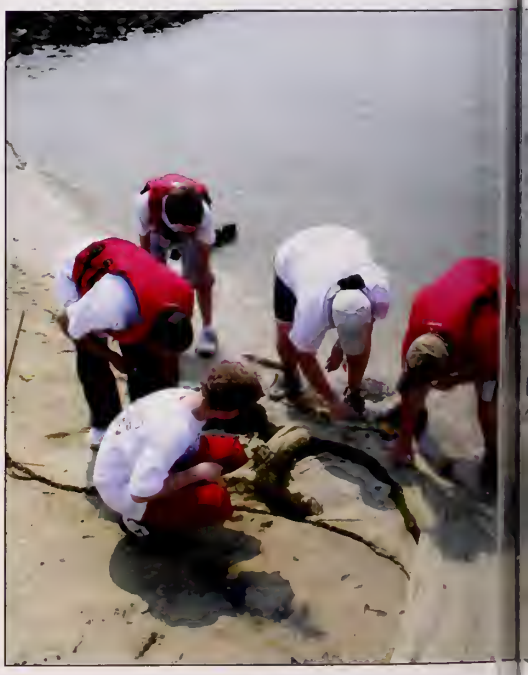
For more information about Learn and Serve Grants go to http://www.learnandserve.org/

Above: This student-dug hole is now a bio(filtration)-pond.
Right: Students check each haul and always find something exciting.

the project—but no one believes such talk from the same woman who dressed up as a lobster to promote recycling!

Administrative support has always been behind all efforts to increase environmental stewardship opportunities at Peasley. Gloucester's School Board and Central Office have shown continued interest in all facets of Peasley's programs. When Peasley's commercial recycling bin was removed, Sara Delo, Gloucester's Clean Community Coordinator, parents, and staff worked together to get the bin returned to the school. During the time the bin was removed, Peasley students were able to continue their recycling effort, in place for over a decade, because several dedicated and determined teachers transported the piles of paper, plastic and aluminum to the recycling center for the students.

Another key factor contributing to the longevity of Peasley's steward-



Above: If you handle a crab with care you won't get pinched.
Below: No classroom with walls can match this setting.

ship initiatives is the creativity of Peasley's science team in developing new and interesting lessons, classes and programs that focus on environmental Standards of Learning. "Stewardship experiences and working in the field aren't add-ons or luxury lessons," states teacher Susan Walton, "they're a necessity."

But perhaps insight into the magic created by the students and teachers at Peasley is best understood by listening to the kids themselves. Mark expressed the wishes of all of the students when he explained, "Human waste lurks in the water we play and fish in. I hope sometime in the future this changes." And Ashley who said, "It seems awesome to put the environment in our own hands...to do something to help it."

But even more telling was Adrienne's statement: "Until now I never went in the woods or out in nature much...I didn't know what it was like. I used to be afraid but I'm not anymore."

Opportunities to engage in activities that help protect our natural world help our children learn to love nature and stay involved in their communities—and as Adrienne has shown us, these experiences give something back to the students as well. □

Gail Brown is a retired principal for Chesterfield County Public Schools. She is a lifelong learner and educator, and her teaching and administrative experiences in grades K-12 have taught her that project-based environmental programs teach science standards, promote core values, and provide exciting educational experiences for the entire community.

Above: Patience and attention to detail are needed for work in the field.

Clowns of the M

story and illustrations
by Spike Knuth

Gallinules, moorhens and coots are birds of the marshes. They are somewhat secretive in their habits to the extent that they prefer to keep undercover in dense marsh vegetation, but their loud cackling, clucking, grunting and screams, similar to domestic fowl, usually give away their location. Their bills are slim but more conical in shape.

They all build nests of decayed or decaying marsh vegetation, often on floating platforms attached to live stems. They lay fairly high numbers of eggs, and the young are mostly glossy black or red in their natal down and are able to run about shortly after hatching. Incubation takes place in 13–15 days and the young fledge within two weeks or so.

All of these marsh birds tend to be weak fliers that take flight hesitantly. They barely skim the tops of the tall marsh plants with legs dangling, suddenly dropping down as if exhausted or shot. However, the coot breaks this mold and, although it has to run over the surface to get airborne, it is a strong flier and commonly rafts up like ducks during migrations.

Common Moorhen

arshes

Due to their feeble-looking flight it makes one wonder how they can migrate at all and, in fact, like rails, many appear in strange locations during migration.

Common Moorhen

(Gallinula chloropus)

A bird that is frequently confused with the coot is the common gallinule, now known as the common moorhen. Another bird, the purple gallinule, ranges mostly south of Virginia. They all look like clowns with big noses! The most obvious difference between the two Virginia species is the red bill and facial plate of the common gallinule/moorhen, while the coot's is white. The moorhen has a line of white extending from its flanks along its side as well as an inverted white vee on its under tail coverts. Its feet are not webbed, nor lobed. All these birds are placed in the rail family by ornithologists.

Once known as the common gallinule, in 1983 its official ornithological-correct name was designated as "common moorhen." Its closest relative is the purple gallinule, a more southerly species, which is occasionally found in Virginia. The two are listed as moorhen and gallinule in the migratory waterfowl hunting regulations.

American Coot

Among its other names are meadow hen, red-billed mud hen, pond chicken, and "pad-walker." Its scientific names are *gallinula*, meaning "little hen" in Latin, *chloropus*, meaning "green-footed" in Greek, and *cachinanas*, which is Latin for "laughing;" in other words, a "laughing, green-footed, little hen!"

The moorhen is 12–15 inches long. Its color is dark bluish-gray on its head and breast fading to brownish gray on its upper back. It has a red frontal plate and a chicken-like red bill, which is tipped with yellow. It has an inverted, V-shaped white patch on its under tail coverts, and a narrow white line or streak outlining its flanks. Its legs and feet are yellowish and its toes are long and slender, which distributes the bird's weight, enabling it to walk on floating vegetation, such as lily pads, hence the nickname "pad-walker." It also has a habit of twitching or jerking its tail, and bobbing its head as it walks or swims. The moorhen's call consists of chicken-like clucks, shrieks and laugh-like squawks.

Moorhens occur virtually all over the world, except Australia. However, it is not especially abundant anywhere in these areas and, because of its secretive habitation of marshes, it is seldom observed. Moorhens inhabit freshwater marshes although they will be found close to salt or brackish marshes.

In the eastern United States common moorhens breed as far north as New Brunswick. Nesting begins in late April or early May. A platform of floating aquatic vegetation is constructed and attached to the stems of living emergent vegetation, such as reeds, rushes or cattails. Moorhens feed on a variety of aquatic plant seeds, pondweeds, insect larvae, aquatic insects, worms and snails.

Moorhens migrate in September–October and, although it is associated with marshland and coastal areas, they can end up in some seemingly out of the way places, including inland mountain valleys, marshy ponds, wet meadows, streams, and even suburban backyards. They will winter along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts from Virginia to Panama.

Purple Gallinule

(Porphyrio martinica)

The purple gallinule is a bird of the tropical and sub-tropical climates, but occasionally may be found north to the Chesapeake Bay Region, Eastern Shore, and south-

Purple Gallinule

eastern Virginia. It is similar in size, 13–14 inches, and shape to the common moorhen, but its colors are much showier. Purple gallinules have bluish-purple neck and underparts and its back and wings are olive-green or iridescent bronzy-green. The frontal shield is light blue and it has a white patch beneath its short tail. The yellow-tipped red bill gives it a clown-like appearance. It has a narrow white line at the base of the bill.

One of the most conspicuous identifying marks of the purple gallinule is their bright yellow legs and toes. In flight they dangle awkwardly, like rails. The toes are extremely long, enabling it to walk over floating vegetation or crawl about in dense vegetation hanging over the water. It also has the nicknames pad walker and pond chicken. Like the moorhen, the gallinule's calls are hen-like cackling or harsh, squawky laughing.

They nest in dense marsh vegetation building a round platform nest of dead aquatic vegetation, usually anchored to living emergent vegetation like pickerel weed. They feed on small snails, aquatic insects, and plant seeds, and in fall it will go to grain and rice fields.

Purple gallinules winter along the South Atlantic coast of Florida and the Gulf Coast from Florida to Texas, Mexico and Central America.

American Coot

(Fulica americana)

The American coot is a common sight in Atlantic coastal marshes, shallow ponds, and bogs where reeds, rushes and cattails grow. This comical "clown of the marsh" is a dark, slate-gray, rounded-bodied bird with a smallish black head that "bobs" as it swims. Its bill is white or cream colored, it has white under tail coverts, and its legs and feet are greenish. It has a deep red facial plate. The European and Caribbean coots have white facial plates. Young birds are similar but duller, more brownish and lighter on their undersides. They measure 13–16 inches.

The toes of the coot are lobed, not webbed. This enables it to swim or dive, as well as walk about through thick marsh foliage. It is as much at home swimming, diving or tippling as ducks. While it is a strong diver, it is so buoyant that it pops up like a beach ball when it surfaces! Its toes are also equipped with sharp, powerful claws on which it relies in fights with other coots for nesting territory.

In order to become airborne, the coot must run over the water to gain speed and lift. At first its flight appears a bit laborious, but once it gets going, its flight is rather swift and sure. When a flock is startled, it scatters with a roar of splashing feet and wildly fluttering wings, flying in all directions with big feet dangling.

Coots leave their wintering grounds along coastal, freshwater marshes in early March and head for their breeding marshes in the northern tier of states and Canada. If we could follow them, we'd see them in large rafts, bobbing on the waves of Midwestern lakes like the western shore of Lake Erie, Lake Winnebago in Wisconsin, and a host of other lakes and marshes. Sometimes the lakes are still covered with melting ice flows and the coots sit on them resting and preening, looking especially dark and healthy. Many will nest in the Great Lakes region and the Dakota prairies, but the majority will go to Canadian prairie sloughs.

Large and small marshes alike resound with the constant clucking, screeching, babbling, squawking and other grating noises accompanied by much fighting, splashing and fussing. Coots tend to breed close together in marsh sloughs. Their nests are large structures of dead and decaying stems of marsh vegetation, woven together and piled up with a bowl or cup shaped hollow in the center. All this is built atop a floating platform of dead vegetation and attached to growing plants to stabilize it.

Coots feed on a variety of aquatic plants as well as some terrestrial plants. They are said to be especially fond of musk grass. They also eat a wide variety of aquatic animal matter such as snails, insects and worms. Coots also like wild celery or valisineria grass. This is why you will often see widgeon and gadwall sitting amid rafting, feeding coots. They can't dive like the coot, so they wait for the coots to surface with a morsel of wild celery and grab it from them as they come up. For this reason, many old-time duck hunter decoy sets contained a good number of coot decoys as "confidence decoys" to entice favored ducks into shotgun range.

With the coming of fall, coots begin to gather again in large rafts on bigger lakes and marshes. One of its common names in the Midwest is mudhen, but they are also called sea crow, water hen, water chicken, marsh chicken, puldoo or blue peter. Blue pete is the common name around Back Bay.

This coot should not be confused with the "sea coot," which is an all encompassing name for the sea ducks known as scoters—surf, white-winged and black—which are seen mainly on salt water along the coast. In fall, beginning in late September and especially in October, start looking for this chicken-like bird of the marsh. □

Spike Kuuth is an avid naturalist and wildlife artist. For over 30 years his artwork and writing have appeared in Virginia Wildlife. *Spike is also a member of the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association.*

Be Wild! Live Wild! Grow Wild! is a regular feature that highlights Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan, which is designed to unite natural resources agencies, sportsmen and women, conservationists and citizens in a common vision for the conservation of the Commonwealth's wildlife and habitats in which they live. To learn more or to become involved with this new program visit: bewildvirginia.org.

Journal

2007-2008 Outdoor Calendar of Events

December 8: *Generation Deer Hunting Workshop,* Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Prince William County. For youth 12–18 years old.

December 8: *Educational Youth Rabbit Hunting Workshop,* Bedford County.

December 29: *Educational Waterfowl Workshop for Youth,* Essex County.

January 14: *Educational Waterfowl Workshop for Women,* Essex County.

For more information call 804-367-0656 or visit the Department's Web site for registration at www.dgif.virginia.gov under Upcoming Events.

Don't Forget: Mandatory Duck Stamps and HIP

All hunters (whether licensed or exempt from being licensed), who plan to hunt doves, waterfowl, rails, woodcock, snipe, coots, gallinules or moorhens in Virginia must be registered with the Virginia Harvest Information Program (HIP). HIP is required each year and a new registration number is needed for the 2007-2008 hunting season. To obtain a new HIP number migratory game bird hunters can register online at **www.VAHIP.com** or call 1-888-788-9772.

In addition, Virginia waterfowl hunters must obtain a Federal Duck Stamp and the Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp to hunt waterfowl in Virginia. The annual Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp can be purchased for a fee of $10.00 (resident or non-resident) at VDGIF license agents or clerks that sell Virginia hunting licenses or from the Department's Web site. To request collector stamps and prints, contact Mike Hinton at (540) 351-0564 or by e-mail at ducks@hintons.org.

Scout Online! Find Game

Find Game is an interactive Web-based map viewer designed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to provide better and more current information about hunting land location and access in Virginia. *Find Game* allows users to map hunting areas by location and/or by game species, along with hunting quality by species, land manager contact information, site description, facilities available, access information and associated Web links. To learn more about *Find Game* visit **www.dgif.virginia.gov/hunting/find-game.**

"Be quiet, you'll wake him up."

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Musky Record Broken

The State Record Fish Committee of theVirginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has certified a new state record musky. On June 1, 2007, Shannon Hill (right), of Christiansburg,Virginia, caught a 45 pound, 8 ounce musky from the New River.That topped the existing record, also caught in the New River, of 45 pounds set in 1989 by R.A. Underwood. Mr. Hill's huge musky measured 53 inches long and had a girth of 24.5 inches.

Report Wildlife Violations
1-800-237-5712

Lifetime Licenses

Open the door to a lifetime of enjoyment in the great outdoors of Virginia with a lifetime freshwater fishing, hunting or trout license! It's an investment that keeps on giving.
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or call (804) 367-1076.

2007 Virginia Wildlife Collector's Knife

2007 Limited Edition *Virginia Wildlife* Collector's Knife

Our 2007 Collector's knife has been customized by Buck Knives. This classic model 110 folding knife is 8 1/2" long when fully opened and has a distinctive, natural woodgrain handle with gold lettering. Each knife is individually serial numbered and has a mirror polished blade engraved with a fox. Our custom knife comes in a solid cherry box with a collage of foxes engraved on the box cover.

Item # VW 407 $90.00 each (plus $7.25 S&H)

To see more of our wildlife collectables and to order online go to www.dgif.virginia.gov or call (804)367-2569

On The Water

by Jim Crosby

Forgetting The Small Stuff

Small watercraft can get you into trouble quicker than the big ones because the responsibility can sneak up on you. Canoes, kayaks, dinghies, johnboats and such tend to lessen the care and safety concerns of users, where the responsibility of a yacht captain is more clearly defined and obvious.

To start with, how much consideration should a vessel get that costs less than a weeks pay and only carries a couple of people? Where the responsibility for a yacht costing thousands to millions of dollars is quite obvious.

Therein lies the problem because they all carry people and its people we want to protect regardless of the numbers. Yacht owners don't usually cut corners on safety equipment. They have enough invested at the point of sale that they want and expect the best safety equipment money can buy.

What is a human life worth? When I visit the local sportswear stores, I listen to conversations about life jackets and how decisions are made regarding which one to purchase. Springing for a good quality life jacket seems to be a tough decision to make.

©Dwight Dyke

Most boaters know they have to have one, but there is no law or rules about how much you have to spend. The tendency is to buy the cheapest one that will meet the legal requirements, because they really don't intend on wearing them anyway. Overlooked are the concerns for size, fit, color, comfort and the real need to actually wear it.

There is no such thing as a universal life jacket that will fit all who might use the vessel. Life jacket approvals are based on the weight and/or chest size of the user and are clearly marked on the labels that also carry the necessary Coast Guard Approval.

In addition to other requirements, the law states that all recreational boats, regardless of size, must have a wearable PFD (Personal Flotation Device) for every person onboard. Each PFD must be of appropriate size for each person, in serviceable condition, and readily accessible. That means if you have a small child onboard, you must have a jacket labeled to indicate it is approved for use by that child, and it couldn't be more readily accessible than when they are actually wearing it.

Hence, there is no such thing as a universal PFD. I recommend that a PFD be the personal property of the user to insure that it is of appropriate size and that it goes aboard along with your sunglasses and other personal property.

PFD color is another concern. You can find them in a wide variety of colors and some even sport cartoon characters to make them more appealing to the youngsters—bad idea! A PFD/Life Jacket is a piece of safety equipment and should be removed entirely from the toy/entertainment category.

The blue, green, gray or brown variety should be avoided at all costs. Rescuers will tell you colors that blend with the color of the water tend to hide victims from view and make rescue more difficult and sometimes impossible. In my opinion the only color for a PFD is International Orange, the universal emergency color so designated because of its ability to stand out in all natural environments. The professionals, like the Coast Guard, always have International Orange PFDs and they actually wear them as they work on deck or in open boats.

Federal law now states that no person may operate a recreational vessel on federal waters with any child under age 13 unless they are wearing an approved PFD, except when the child is below deck or in an enclosed cabin.

I also strongly recommend that a whistle be attached to each life jacket so one could attract attention if they need to while wearing it overboard.

If you have concerns about the currently required safety equipment for your particular recreational vessel, you can obtain a copy of the *Virginia Watercraft Owner's Guide* from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. You can write them at: P.O. Box 11104; Richmond, VA 23230-1104. The guides are also available from various regional offices across the state. Check your local telephone directory. □

Share your questions, concerns or suggestions with me at: jecrosby@comcast.net.

RECIPES

by Joan Cone

Venison for a Wonderful Holiday Meal

You can take pride in offering your holiday guests venison tenderloin. It is more tasty than beef fillet mignon. Just before your oven casseroles are ready, prepare these fillets and serve immediately.

Menu

Venison Fillets with Madeira Mushrooms
Orange Topped Sweet Potato Bake
Spinach-Artichoke Casserole
Venison Mincemeat Pie

Venison Fillets With Madeira Mushrooms

Remove all surface fat and connective tissue from whole venison tenderloin. Slice tenderloin into 1 to 1¼-inch fillets. Melt enough butter in a heavy skillet to generously cover the bottom of a skillet. Place fillets in hot butter and brown quickly. Turn and brown on opposite side, cooking only until meat is rare (115° to 120° F. on meat thermometer) or medium rare (125° to 130° F.). Salt and pepper if desired. Do not overcook. Allow 2 fillets per person.

Madeira Mushrooms
1 cup sliced baby portabella mushrooms
2 to 3 tablespoons butter
2 to 3 tablespoons Madeira wine

Melt butter in a medium skillet and add mushrooms. Cook until just soft and stir in wine. Pour over cooked tenderloin fillets right before serving.

Orange Topped Sweet Potato Bake

2½ pounds sweet potatoes cooked, peeled and mashed
¼ cup packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened
Grated peel of one orange
¼ cup milk
¼ cup brandy or orange juice
2 oranges peeled, cut in half-cartwheel slices

In large bowl, combine sweet potatoes, sugar, butter and orange peel; beat well. Stir in milk and brandy. Spoon mixture into a buttered, 1½-quart shallow baking dish, spreading evenly. Bake, uncovered, at 350° F. for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and arrange orange slices in 2 rows on top of sweet potato mixture. Sprinkle with 1 to 2 tablespoons additional brown sugar, if desired. Bake 5 minutes longer, just to heat oranges and melt sugar. Makes 4 cups.

Spinach-Artichoke Casserole

3 packages (10 ounces each) frozen, chopped spinach
¼ cup butter or margarine
1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, room temperature
¼ cup milk
2 jars (6 ounces each) marinated artichoke hearts, drained
Grated Parmesan cheese

Cook spinach according to package directions and drain. Whisk together until smooth the melted butter, cream cheese and milk. Add this mixture to the drained spinach and mix well. Stir in drained artichoke hearts. Pour into a 2-quart casserole and sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top. Heat in a 350° F. oven for 30 minutes or until hot throughout. Serves 4 to 6.

Venison Mincemeat Pie

1 package Pillsbury Pie Crusts
4 to 5 cups venison mincemeat, (*See recipe below*)
1 tablespoon milk
1 tablespoon sugar

Preheat oven to 425° F. Unroll and line a 9-inch pie plate with 1 pie crust. Fill with mincemeat. Cover with remaining crust; seal and crimp edges. To glaze, brush the top with milk and sprinkle with sugar. Cut several steam vents using a sharp paring knife. Bake at 425° F. for 20 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350° F. and continue baking for about 30 to 35 minutes longer until pastry is golden. Makes 8 servings.

Venison Mincemeat
1 pound ground deer or bison meat
2 pounds apples, peeled, cored and chopped
¼ pound butter or margarine
2 cups white sugar
2 cups packed brown sugar
8 ounces raisins
5 ounces currants
1½ cups sweet, fresh apple cider
½ cup apple cider vinegar
Salt to taste
2 teaspoons nutmeg
2 teaspoons ground cloves
3 teaspoons cinnamon
2 teaspoons mace
3 tablespoons brandy

Combine all ingredients, except brandy, in a large, deep kettle and boil slowly, uncovered, for 2 hours. After mixture cools, add brandy. Pour mincemeat into jars or plastic containers and freeze until ready to use. Makes 2 quarts or 2 pies. □

Photo Tips

by Lynda Richardson

IPTC: An Important Part of Digital Photography

How do you sign your name to a digital file and why is this important? You embed the photograph with appropriate IPTC information and you do this because you always want your name, contact and caption information attached to your work of art! Not many folks know anything about IPTC information, but they should!

IPTC, which stands for International Press Telecommunications Council, was one of the groups responsible for encouraging the standards for combining text information with digital image data. Back in the old days, wire service and other news photographers simply attached typed captions to the photographs they transmitted around the country. With the digital age, captions had to be secured to photographs digitally. This embedded data soon became known as IPTC information.

There is a little secret out there that many digital photographers don't know. Digital files have the ability to retain loads of information. Most digital cameras are already programmed to embed data into your image files such as; the type of camera and lens used, the time and date an image was taken, ISO, and exposures. What the camera adds is called EXIF information. This is a very cool feature, but most folks don't realize that you can also add your own information such as name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and any notes or caption information about the photograph! When referring to both the EXIF and IPTC information together, this information is known as the metadata of a digital photograph.

To process your digital files, you normally use an image software program that either comes with the camera or that you can buy separately. At this time, Adobe PhotoShop appears to be the industry standard digital image-processing program and in it you can easily create and add IPTC information to your photographs. If you don't have PhotoShop, check your software program as you should be able to access a "File Info" module where you can add information to each image either individually or in batches. Check the program's manual under "File Info," IPTC, or metadata for details.

Now, think about it. If you were submitting digital photographs to a magazine, book, newspaper or **photo contest** (hint, hint), wouldn't it be extremely helpful to always have contact and caption information following the photograph around? (Pieces of paper do get lost.) While judging last year's *Virginia Wildlife* Magazine's Annual Photography Competition, we *rarely* found any digital submissions that contained IPTC information which made judging more difficult. Would you send slides out without your name written on them?? I don't think so!

So, before you send out any of your digital photographs, be sure to include your IPTC information embedded in every image. Not only will you protect your images, you will make contest judges and photo editors much happier!

Happy Shooting! □

You are invited to submit one of your best images to "Image of the Month," Virginia Wildlife Magazine, P.O. Box 11104, (4010 West Broad Street), Richmond, VA, 23230-1104. Send original slides, high quality prints, or high res jpeg files on disk and include a self addressed, stamped envelope or other shipping method for return. Also, please include any pertinent information regarding how and where the image was captured, what camera, film and settings you used. I hope to see your image as our next, "Image of the Month!"

Image of the Month

Congratulations go to Kathy Russell, of Linden, for her delightful photograph of a whitetail doe and fawn in the snow. Kathy captured this image in her backyard using a Fuji FinePix digital S5100 camera shot at 1/350th at f4.5. Beautiful photograph Kathy!

The New 2008 *Virginia Wildlife Calendar* Is Now Available

It's time to purchase the new 2008 Virginia Wildlife Calendar. For more than 20 years the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has been publishing one of the most informative and beautiful wildlife calendars in the country. This special edition of the Virginia Wildlife Calendar highlights 12 of the 925 species of greatest conservation need identified in the Virginia Wildlife Action Plan. This comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy unites natural resource agencies and citizens through a common vision and concept for the conservation of the Commonwealth's wildlife and habitats in which they live.

An important component of the Virginia Wildlife Action Plan is participation of citizens from around the state to get involved with wildlife conservation efforts. By purchasing the new 2008 Virginia Wildlife Calendar you not only get 12 months of incredible wildlife viewing, but you also take that first step in helping to bring awareness to important wildlife issues facing our state.

Virginia Wildlife Calendars make great holiday gifts and are only $10 each. They begin with January 2008 and run through December 2008. Quantities are limited, so order now! Make check payable to: Treasure of Virginia and send to Virginia Wildlife Calendar, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. If you would like to use your VISA or MasterCard you can order online at www.dgif.virginia.gov. **Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.**

To learn more about the Virginia Wildlife Action Plan visit www.bewildvirginia.org.

This Holiday Season

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ALL YEAR LONG

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